

B.S.B.I. NEWS

Edited by J. E. ELSLEY

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PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTION

Between my writing this and your receiving it two special events will have taken place. The Society had Princess Royal as Patron for 45 years and has had Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother since 1966 a connection and honour which have been much appreciated. We have kept touch, exchanged good wishes and so on, but in all these years neither of our Patrons has, I am sorry to say, ever been specifically invited to attend any of our activities.

Now however, we are delighted that The Queen Mother has graciously agreed that we may take advantage of the coincidence of our long-overdue Caithness Field Meeting with her residence at the Castle of Mey. We appreciate this, especially in that she is then on holiday and should be free of official duties. But we trust she will have enjoyed meeting this sample score or so of our members, as much as they will have been privileged to meet her.

The other feature will have been the first joint conference between the R.H.S. and our Society. We decided it would be best to hold this in the lecture room at the R.H.S. New Hall, which seats 230, and so numbers were limited accordingly — and in any event anything more than this number would have been too much of a crowd. But this has meant, sadly, turning away a considerable number of applicants. In any event there were too many subjects to be fitted into two days and many important ones such as ferns, heathers, orchids and trees were left out. So I hope there may be another such conference in two or three years' time. I am sure this meeting will have done much to help widen the interests of both gardeners and field botanists and show how much each can help the other. One result of this conference is that I am suggesting the Society invite the R.H.S. to have a representative on its Conservation Committee, for gardeners can do much to help conserve wild plants. We appreciated too the R.H.S. re-printing in their August Journal the Presidential Address on this theme given at our last A.G.M., and the great help they, and notably Mr. Brickell and Mr. Elsley have given to the administration.

I have read The Countryman ever since its first issue — it and Stephen King Hall's K-H Newsletter, for and with whom I worked, and Theo Steven's "My Garden" all started at much the same time in the 1930's. Now only The Countryman survives, but it was nice to see in the summer issue our member Dr. Bruce Campbell giving us and this Newsletter a page. Perhaps other members who have similar access to journals could do likewise? This and the conference should help add the new members we still need, but the best way of all is by personal approach — I am constantly astonished to learn of fresh people who are not members and one never dreamt had not been members for ages. The membership figures this year are, thank you, so far good: indeed already there are more gains than in any year except the one after the Atlas was published. But we cannot tot up accurately our losses until the end of the year, and I fear there are some — but still gratifyingly few — who were deterred by the rise we had to make in the subscriptions. So we still need, please, your active help and in the next Newsletter, early in the new year. I hope there will be good news on this important matter.

At the risk of invidious selection, for we have many good helpers, there were two more people I should have mentioned in the last Newsletter as helpers with our affairs. One is Mr. W. L. Stevens, who with his wife copes so efficiently with multifarious details as Membership Treasurer; the other is Miss R. Hartas-Jackson whose appointment as Assistant Membership Secretary was confirmed at the A.G.M. Quite apart from dealing with all the subscriptions, enquiries and complications, there were no less than 116 changes of address alone in the first six months of this year. We could not wish for these records to be kept better.

We also need your help in getting meaty material for this Newsletter. We still almost entirely lack personal news of members and of the finds they have made — those that we heard of seemed too chancey a lot to justify putting in. But I cannot fail to mention the death of Mr. A. W. Stelfox, the doyen of Irish Naturalists, who so worthily carried on the Præger tradition. We had indeed been fortunate that he has lived until nearing 90, and had remained a stimulating personality all this time.

DAVID MCCLINTOCK

EDITOR'S NOTES

The changed form of presentation which was adopted for our second Newsletter appears, from the comments received, to have pleased many of our members. However, do continue to forward any suggestions/ideas you would like to see incorporated in this publication. I should here like to reiterate our President's appeal for further contributions from members — it is such short items that we feel are of particular interest to readers.

The distribution and timing of the three Newsletters each year must, for financial reasons, be governed by our major mailing dates. For this reason this number must follow comparatively quickly after the July issue and this factor, combined with the holiday season, means this Newsletter is shorter than the previous issue. It is intended to distribute the next issue with a January, 1973 mailing, so please could material for inclusion be sent to me by mid-November (R.H.S. Garden, Wisley, Ripley, Woking, Surrey.)

Members may be interested to know that, on a recent visit to the Welsh borders, I was privileged to see a flourishing colony of the white-flowered *Potentilla rupestris* on private property near Llyswen in Radnorshire. At the time of my visit many of the plants had produced quantities of seed, some of which I hope we may successfully germinate. Another feature which greatly impressed me, especially in the Monmouth area, was the abundance of species-rich roadside verges and hedgerows. Flourishing stands of the Twayblade, *Listera ovata*, were a most imposing sight in these habitats.

JOHN ELSLEY

NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY

The B.S.B.I. is a learned Society, but it is special among societies of its kind in that both professionals and amateurs have been able to contribute to the running and welfare of the Society. Botany is a subject in which the amateur can give valuable assistance, and in some cases further the researches of the academic botanist in the field. Sometimes, however, do amateurs perhaps think of "field botany" as being synonymous with "botany" without considering the vast numbers of subjects now encompassed in the sphere of botany? As an amateur, I am sure that I have benefited considerably from contact with professional botanists, whose ideas have greatly enriched the aspect of the plant in the field, and we should not want to lose in the years ahead this co-operation amongst our ranks, enjoyed in the past.

Having been almost caught several times when receiving by post a leaflet or Paper and an unattached letter, which remains behind in the envelope, where it is easily overlooked, I wonder if sometimes members who do not receive odd items from a mailing just might have left them in the envelope? As we often have loose sheets with our mailings, please be sure that your envelope is empty before throwing it away!

MARY BRIGGS

DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLICATIONS

It has come to our attention that there have been serious errors in the distribution of recent numbers of the Society's publications. This has been especially significant with respect to the Taraxacum Flora and the latest number of Watsonia No. 9 part 2). Several members received multiple deliveries of the Taraxacum Flora. In one case no less than six were sent, when only one had been ordered, while in another a member who had ordered three copies received only one. Finally, several members known to us have still not had their Watsonias and, with justification, are annoyed that they have been prevented from enjoying the very interesting papers in this part of our periodical. Members can be assured that the officers and council take a serious view of these mistakes, not least because our publications form the main link with our membership and represent the principal return to the members for their annual subscription. Please do not suffer in silence! If you have reason to believe that you have not had any publications to which you are entitled, either by your membership subscription or by special order, please let the Society know as soon as possible.

The Society's voluntary editors and other officers perform tremendous labours largely unseen and unsung by the ordinary members of the Society, and we must always be very thankful that we have been so very well served. Now that we have the Newsletter, there is ample scope for all members to submit material for publication, and it is hoped that our editors will receive the maximum co-operation generally in the early submission of manuscripts on such subjects as reports of field meetings, book reviews, short notes, or letters. In this way we shall get news to you in good time.

J. CANNON

(Mr. Cannon is our anchor-man at the Department of Botany at the British Museum. He sorts and distributes all our mail addressed there, and deals with telephone calls for the Society. Although he is technically not an officer of the Society, he is certainly one of the members who "perform tremendous labours largely unseen and unsung"—D. McC.)

BOOK NOTES

In addition to the books listed in the last Newsletter the following will also be reviewed in the next part of *Watsonia* [Vol. 9(3)]:—

- Heaths and Heathers, by Terry L. Underhill
- The Price of Amenity, by Roy Gregory
- A Computer-Mapped Flora, by Cadbury, Hawkes & Readett
- British Wild Flowers, by John Hutchinson (hardback edition)
- Flora der Schweiz, Vol. 2, by Hess & Landolt
- Nature Conservation, by M. Baron
- Wildlife Conservation in Woodlands, by R. C. Steele
- Flora of Staffordshire, by E. S. Edees; £4.20

Gregory's treatment of various legal battles in which amenity was involved will be of special interest to B.S.B.I. members, as it includes an account of the Cow Green (Teesdale) case, in which the Society figured prominently. The first county Flora to be written with the help of a computer (that of Warwickshire) also deserves to be noted. It is a monumental work and may well prove to be a harbinger of other Floras in which the computer is used as an aid to the compilation and display of the records. Conservation, which has long been a burning topic among botanists, has recently perforce become general concern. It is good, therefore, to have two more books on the subject, one a general treatment and the other dealing with a particular area.

The following books have been received or noted recently and will, it is hoped, be reviewed in *Watsonia*.

Orkney, a Checklist of Vascular plants, by Miss E. Bullard

The Life of a Tree, by Arnold Darlington; £1·60

Variation and Adaptation in Plant Species, by D. A. Jones & D. A. Wilkins; £1·70

Narcotic Plants, by W. Emboden; £2·20

Three-Dimensional Structure of Wood, by Meylan & Butterfield

Probing Plant Structure, by Meylan & Butterfield

Thomas Johnson. Journeys in Kent & Hampstead—edited by J. S. L. Gilmour; £5·25

The Naturalist in the Isle of Man, by L. S. Garrad; £3·75

Chromosomal Evolution in Higher Plants, by G. L. Stebbins

N. K. B. ROBSON

PROFILE

MRS. MARY BRIGGS

(Secretary, B.S.B.I. 1972-73)

Secretarily speaking, it seems important to put Mary Briggs' reliable efficiency before all her other attributes and indeed, at first that is perhaps why she is so sought after in the natural history/conservation world, but her willingness to help comes a very near second.

If there were a stipulation that only one outstanding feature in her character must be mentioned in this profile, I shouldn't have chosen either of those, although she has them so highly developed. It is Mary's kindness, thoughtfulness and trouble-taking warmth; her ability to put herself into other people's places and to do the things that she feels would be most helpful, that strikes you over and over again and never diminishes however well you get to know her. It is Mary who always writes letters of condolence, sends cards to encourage the young, flowers to help in illness and reminders about functions that possibly less busy people may forget.

All these features, of course, add up to a great willingness to serve. Sometimes, I have noticed, the willingness is over-taxed and more is demanded than an already overworked family and professional woman can possibly undertake. For Mary is Chief Pharmacist at Horsham Hospital as well as a much-loved, calm and methodical wife and mother.

But she seldom says 'no' to any project where she feels she can be useful. And she will never admit to being tired! I have seen her after a day's work at the Southern Counties Show on the Sussex Trust for Conservation's exhibit (much of which she will have prepared, collected and carried there herself), exhausted and white-faced under the freckles. The rest of us could have cried with fatigue but Mary would carry on and be there again, persuasive and first-class at recruiting members the next day. As a member of their Council, she has been endlessly helpful in many capacities to the Trust's work and reputation.

She joined the B.S.B.I. in 1960 and became Meetings Secretary in 1964. She seldom now has time to pursue sheer 'botanising' herself, which she loves, but on all expeditions will be busy making beginners and experts alike feel at home and one of the party.

She is known as Mrs. Mary Briggs 'which does not indicate widowhood, separation or divorce' but which is a useful professional title. Her husband, Alan, is a great support to all her work and she insists on giving him the entire credit for enabling her to be so much help to others. Her two children, Jenny (who goes to University next October) and Roger (who is still at school) are handsome, well-balanced teenagers and a wonderful testimonial to a happy home life. Mary and Alan have guided them towards an affectionate, family-behind-you-all-the-time independence.

I have known her for over twenty years. When I met her the first time, she was a young, very enthusiastic naturalist. She is still a good general naturalist but her love of wild plants took the lead after she met Ted Lousley and Oliver Buckle when they came to lecture to the Horsham Natural History Society for which she arranged the lecture programme so interestingly in its early days, and of which Society, like so many others, she has now become a revered, respected and eminent member.

CERES ESPLAN

FIELD MEETINGS

Each year, the Meetings Committee does its best to plan a number of field meetings which will cover the needs of as many members as possible. Meetings for beginners, others for those with specialist interests, recording meetings, or those aimed at re-finding a plant believed lost from an area, meetings in England and on the continent. (Those in Wales, Scotland and Ireland are organised by their own regional committees.)

Where these meetings are held depend largely upon the distribution of leaders, but as far as possible we try to ensure that no part of the country is passed over completely. Fewer meetings are held in areas remote from large population centres, but this is because of greater complications in organisation, and the obvious possibility that not enough people will be able to make the journey to form a viable party and that the meeting may have to be cancelled. This is why weekend meetings rather than single days are usual in such areas.

In fact, there does tend to be a concentration of meetings in the South-East, but this is where the bulk of the members live, and these meetings are certainly well attended as those who have been to one of Dr. Hubbard's grass days will appreciate. This brings another question — should numbers be limited? Is twenty-four large enough for any party? Where coaches are being used, or for foreign meetings, a limited number is more or less inevitable, but for one day and most weekend meetings the policy at present is to leave the numbers open.

Through the Newsletter we hope to be able to contact more of our members and find their feelings about the present organisation and selection of meetings presented to them, so if anyone has any comments to make, please do write to the Meetings Secretary.

GILLIAN TUCK

GAUDINIA FRAGILIS — A FURTHER NOTE

The compilation by our President, Mr. David McClintock, of all the records of the adventive grass *Gaudinia fragilis* in the British Isles is both useful and interesting (Watsonia 9 (1972) 143-146). In the Appendix of the recorded history of the plant, Mr. McClintock lists in chronological order both the herbarium sheet legends and the references in print. The third entry is given,

“3 July 1906 ? Dr. Pettybridge, Ringsend. Comm. Miss M. Knowles (K)”. The query indicates that the location of Ringsend was not known to the compiler. Ringsend is in County Dublin (H21). In early maps it is shown as a small village at the mouth of the River Liffey, on the south bank. Today it is part of the deep sea dock area within Dublin city. There is now very little open ground.

Dr. George Herbert Pethybridge (1871-1948) who found the grass, was born in Cornwall. He worked in Dublin in the years 1900-1922, first as teacher in the Royal College of Science and later as Economic Adviser to the Department of Agriculture as Director of the Seeds and Plant Diseases Division. In later years he was mycologist in the British Ministry of Agriculture. Dr. Pethybridge was a well-known mycologist, many specimens collected by him are in the herbarium (DBN). With Præger he carried out one of the first ecological surveys, The Vegetation of the District Lying South of Dublin, PRIA, 1905.

Miss Matilda Cullen Knowles who died in 1933, a distinguished lichenologist, is the author of *The Lichens of Ireland* (1929). Miss Knowles was attached to the Herbarium, National Museum of Ireland. She contributed records of plants from Tyrone and from Limerick to *Irish Topographical Botany* (1901). She wrote many papers in the *Irish Naturalist* including one on “A Contribution towards an Alien Flora of Ireland” being an account of plants found associated with Shackleton’s Mill at Straffan, Co. Kildare, in 1906.

The Ringsend specimen at Kew is then the first record of *Gaudinia fragilis* in Ireland and not the Toormore, West Cork collection as was stated by me in the INJ 14 (1964). The record remained unnoticed until Mr. McClintock’s work amongst herbarium material and his communication in 1972.

The Lombardstown station is recorded in the INJ 16 (1968) 53 as being in H5, but Lombardstown to the west of Mallow is also west of the railway line and therefore in Mid Cork (H4), as Mr. McClintock states.

M. SCANNELL

Herbarium,
National Botanic Gardens,
Glasnevin,
Dublin.

A CONSERVATION COLLOQUIUM

The President has asked me to write a note on a most satisfactory gathering held at Lady Birley's Festival at Charleston Manor, West Dean, Sussex, on Sunday afternoon the 25th June. It was held in her ancient tithe barn and well over 200 people paid to listen to the proceedings and have a special tea in the garden afterwards. The subject was the conservation of wild and garden plants. The speakers were Mr. T. Wright of Wye College and Mr. David Harvey of the Nature Conservancy, Sussex for the ecologists; Mr. Will Ingwersen, Mr. Arthur Hellyer and Mr. James Russell for the horticulturists, with myself in the Chair. Your President also spoke.

The subjects ranged from the conservation and management of plants on the Sussex Downs, the replanting of old slag heaps, and the preservation of old garden varieties to the compilation of the Red Data Book of threatened plants prepared by Dr. R. Melville of Kew, which I consider to be one of the most important contributions being made to the work of Conservation.

A remarkable number of good points were made during the two hours, which were interspersed with short showings of slides. Indeed so meaty were the contributions that the seated audience asked few questions afterwards, but these were good. All in all, it was a thoroughly worth while meeting that one hopes can be repeated—regularly.

PATRICK M. SYNGE

WARBURG MEMORIAL FUND

The Warburg Memorial Fund was established with donations from botanists, amateur and professional, throughout the country to commemorate Dr. E. F. Warburg and his outstanding contributions to British botany.

The Fund is administered by a joint committee of Officers of the B.S.B.I. and B.B.S., and it is intended that a travelling scholarship be awarded every second year to a botanist under the age of 21 to allow him or her to carry out field-work in the British Isles or elsewhere. The Fund's Rules require that the joint committee should approve the applicant's project before making an award, and also request successful applicants to submit reports on the work that they have carried out with the help of the scholarship.

An award of £75 was made this year to Miss Rosamund Kidmancox, who is studying Botany and Zoology at Bristol University, as a contribution towards her expenses in collecting plants in Sabah this summer.

Very few applications were received by the joint secretaries this year, and it is to be hoped that in 1974 (when the next award can be made), more young botanists will apply for help with their field-work. Members of both the B.S.B.I. and the B.B.S. should seek to inform suitable people so that they can apply in 1974. Applications should then be sent to the Secretary of either Society.

DR. D. H. DALBY

INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF PHYTOSOCIOLOGISTS

Dr. Francis Rose is organising an International meeting in Britain of Phytosociologists in 1973, on behalf of the International Society for Plant Geography and Ecology. The party will be travelling by coach through South-East England, starting at Dover on July 9th, and visiting a number of selected sites for the study of plant communities and the vegetation structure, and later visiting Skye. There may be a limited number of places for British botanists and ecologists who would be prepared to act as guides for part of the tour and members wishing for further details should write to Dr. Francis Rose at Rotherhurst, 36 St. Mary's Road, Liss, Hants.

SCHOOL NATURAL SCIENCE SOCIETY BIENNIAL EXHIBITION

The Biennial Exhibition of the above Society is to be held on Saturday, October 28th, 1972, at the Rachel MacMillan Teachers' Centre, 83 New Kent Road, London, S.E.1. (Elephant and Castle 2 minutes), from 11.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Entrance FREE.

Exhibits will be staged by Scientific Societies, Colleges, Schools, Publishers and suppliers of biological, geographical, optical apparatus, audio-visual and general scientific equipment.

Lunch available (three-course 37p).

(I understand that included in the exhibits will be one staged by Dr. F. Perring on Plant Recording, and an exhibit by Professor Hawkes on the Computer-Mapped Flora of Warwickshire.—Editor.)

WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, established as a result of the National Appeal in 1965, is a unique form of memorial. It enables men and women who might never otherwise have the chance to travel abroad, to widen their knowledge not only in their own field of activity, but also of other people's lives and work in different parts of the world, and as a result of the experience they gain, to contribute more effectively to their profession, community and country.

There are no age limits; academic or professional qualifications are not needed, but candidates must be citizens of the United Kingdom, and must be able to convince the selectors of the worth of their project and that they have the ability and initiative to make full use of the Fellowship both while they are abroad and when they come back.

The grants cover all Fellowship expenses, the average length of which is three months. Interviews will be held in London in January 1973 and successful candidates will be expected to start their travels during that year.

To apply, send your name and address only on a postcard, in September, to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, 10 Queen Street, Mayfair, London W1X 7PD. You will receive an explanatory leaflet and a form to complete which must be returned before November 6th, 1972.

NEW MEMBERS

(May-June 1972)

Ordinary Members (British Isles)

- W. K. Aslet, Weather Hill Cottage, R.H.S. Garden, Wisley, Ripley, Woking, Surrey.
 P. J. Brownsey, Botany Department, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT.
 B. W. H. Coulson, Orchard House, 32 Glapthorn Road, Oundle, Peterborough.
 Miss R. R. Cox, Botany Department, The University, Downing Street, Cambridge.
 T. G. Evans, La Cuesta, Mounon Road, Chepstow, Monmouthshire NP6 5BS.
 J. Forrester, 44 New Street, Carnforth, Lancashire.
 S. J. Goodall, 5 Dobson Road, Bolton, Lancashire.
 P. H. Hainsworth, Manorbier Nursery, Manorbier, Tenby, Pembrokeshire.
 S. J. Heyward, Oakwood Farm, Shipley, Horsham, Sussex RH13 8PY.
 P. H. Hodgson, 14 Chertsey Road, London E.11.
 L. Holman, 16 Poplar Avenue, Bishopton, Renfrewshire PA7 5AE.
 W. J. Newman, c/o 162 Loughborough Road, Ruddington, Nottingham.
 F. T. Palmer, 20 Y Lan, Pencoed, Bridgend, Glamorganshire.
 Mrs. J. H. Parry, 44 Queen Street, Rhyl, North Wales.
 Mrs. A. B. Paton, Upper End Lodge, Eckington, Pershore, Worcestershire.
 D. A. Roughton, 50 Cologne Road, Bovington Camp, Wareham, Dorset.
 Dr. Joan Walker, 5 The Walk, Lyme Regis, Dorset.
 N. B. Williams, Bilberry Cottage, Somerford, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4SW.

Junior Members

- M. A. A. Lowe-Wheeler, Wicker House, Hale Barns, Altrincham, Cheshire.
 Miss L. Parker, 16 Berkeley Road, Nanpanton, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3SJ.
 M. C. Phillips, 21 Park Road, Hengoed, Glamorganshire CF8 7LW.
 S. J. Place, "The Dee's", Hunter's Way, Sheldwich Lees, Faversham, Kent.
 S. Russell, Devon Road, Botley Road, Whitenap, Romsey, Hampshire.
 P. J. Schofield, 48 Lutterworth Road, Leicester LE2 8PF.
 S. J. Shaw, 77 Ulundi Street, Radcliffe, Manchester M26 0AW.
 Miss C. L. Williams, c/o Students Union, University of Keele, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire ST5 5BL.
 J. J. Wood, 15 Cumberland Road, Kew, Richmond, Surrey.

Family Members

- Mrs. B. W. H. Coulson, 32 Glapthorn Road, Oundle, Peterborough.
 Mrs. S. J. Heyward, Oakwood Farm, Shipley, Horsham, Sussex RH13 8PY.
 Mrs. P. J. A. Howard, c/o The Nature Conservancy, Merlewood Research Station, Grange-over-Sands, Lancashire.

Subscriber Member (British Isles)

- Paisley College of Technology, The Library, High Street, Paisley, Renfrewshire.

Overseas (Ordinary Member)

- L. E. Kers, Storgatan 32 n.b., S-11455 Stockholm, Sweden.

Mrs. C. M. Dony, Honorary Membership Secretary.